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Implementing and Evaluating Health Behavior Changes

Robert E. Davis

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Implementing and Evaluating Health Behavior Changes

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University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
May 21, 2021

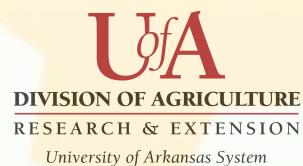
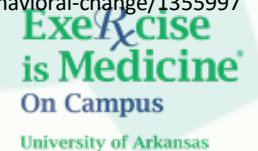
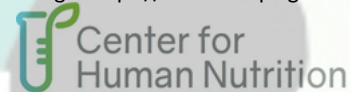


Image: <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/defense-behavioral-change/1355997>



Reminder: Attend the personalized coaching sessions!

- Behavior change coaching
 - Mondays 12:00 – 1:00 pm
 - Danielle Higuera



- Nutrition coaching
 - Tuesdays 12:00 – 1:00 pm
 - Jamie McDermott, MS, RDN/LD



- Physical activity and exercise coaching
 - Thursdays 12:00 – 1:00 pm
 - Bryce Daniels



WEEK #14 CHALLENGE

This week's challenge is to be physically activity for at least 30 minutes each day. Tells us how you did on the Facebook challenge post or email it to dfend@uada.edu or dfend.uofa@gmail.com



This week's demos

- Check our YouTube channel for demos - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1COt-uvHEf5XZhwLswYkXw/featured>
- Check out our website for Fast Facts - <https://aaes.uark.edu/centers-and-programs/nutrition/dfend-3/>
- Fun recipes for summer
- Implementing and evaluating health behavior changes

Today's Speaker: Robert E. Davis, PhD

Implementing and Evaluating Health Behavior Changes

Assistant Professor of Public Health

Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

<https://coehp.uark.edu/the-college/all-college-directory/uid/red007/name/Robert+E.+Davis/>





Robert Davis, PhD

*Assistant professor of
Public Health and
director of the
Substance Use and
Mental Health
Laboratory (SUMH)*

Implementing and evaluating health behavior changes

Health?

Health Behavior?

Health behavior Change?

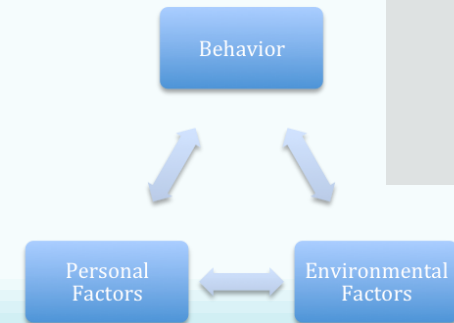
- Not simply the absence of disease.
- The actions, responses or reactions of an individual, group or system that **prevents illness, promotes health and maintain quality of life.**
 - Health promoting/protective
 - Health risk
- More inclusive definition:
 - Health behavior includes not only observable, overt actions **but also the mental events and feelings states that can be reported and measured.**
- An altering of one's behavioral patterns.
 - Starting a new health behavior.
 - Ceasing or altering an existing health behavior.

Health Behavior:

- Health behavior is **complex**.
 - Health behaviors are diverse.
 - Washing hands - balancing your checkbook - quitting smoking - etc...
- Some require higher levels of knowledge, skills, or resources than others.

Initiation of health behavior changes:

- The following are 3 tips for increasing potential for successful initiation of behavior change.
 - 1. Increase your understanding.
 - 2. Understand and expand your motives.
 - 3. Cultivate an environment that facilitates your success.
- The basis of these tips comes from a vast body of behavioral science. Moreover, these recommendations are based on consistent concepts observed across several prominent theories of human behavior.



Tip# 1

Educate yourself!

- Increase your knowledge on the behavior you wish to start **or** cease.
 - Research consistently suggests that those who successfully initiate behavior change make attempts to increase their knowledge and understanding of the behavior change of interest.
- **Why?** What might we gain from this process?
 - Develop a **better understanding of outcome expectations** related to the behavior.
 - **How much of the behavior** is needed to achieve a health-related benefit.
 - Learn how to physically perform the behavior.
 - Learn of localized **resources to support your change**.
 - Additionally, this process geared toward an undesirable health condition **may lead to an unconsidered behavioral solution**.
 - Often we are led to behavior change because of some **health-related cue to action**.
 - Some of our most concerning health issues have multiple behavioral solutions.
 - It is advised that we focus on changing a single behavior at a time.
 - When we need to choose which behavior to change, choose one that is highly volitional (i.e. under your control).
- Where can I find info?
 - Doctors or other content experts, scientific journals, credible websites, books, etc...

Generation of momentum is critical for initiating change.

Tip # 2

Understand and expand your motives!

Affective
association
to behavior

- Why am I contemplating behavior change?
 - Is it an internal or external reason?
 - External motives can drive behavior successfully **but** present issues with sustainability.
- **Practice reflection** to identify the benefits to behavior change.
 - Benefits vs. barriers / mental math / pros and cons / decisional balance / etc...
 - Four dimensions of pros and cons.
 - Instrumental gains/costs for self.
 - Instrumental gains/costs for others.
 - Approval/disapproval for self.
 - Approval/disapproval for others.
- **Try to identify proximal benefits** as apposed to distal benefits
 - Consider the following:
 - How does my behavior align with my self-identity?
 - How does my behavior influence/affect my environment?
 - Not just physical environment but social as well.
 - My relationships (family / friends / other community members).

The influence of the environment on human behavior is beyond question.

Tip # 3

Cultivate an environment that facilitates your success!

- The environment will ultimately **facilitate or undermined** attempts to change behavior.
 - Trying to change behavior without attention to the unique environment is setting one up to fail.
- Cultivate supportive relationships.
 - Companionship / accountability / emotional support / etc...
 - Social media is a good way to “find your people”.
 - Make your commitment to change known.
- Control stimuli.
 - Both, for wanted **and** unwanted behaviors.
 - **Practice reflection** to identify specific factors that serve as stimulus specific to your target behavior.
 - What stimulates craving / what stimulates positive emotion related to desired behaviors.
- Social liberation.
 - **Look for existing environmental factors that serve to liberate you** from undesirable behavior or that facilitate the adoption of desired behaviors.
 - Smoking bans / exercise classes / calorie count menus / etc...

Evaluation of health behavior changes:

- The following are 3 tips for evaluation of behavior change.
 - 1. Set goals for behavior change.
 - 2. Self-monitor (reflect and refine).
 - 3. Reinforce yourself.
- The basis of these tips comes from a vast body of behavioral science. Moreover, these recommendations are based in consistent concepts observed across several theories of health behavior and health behavior change.

We can't really discuss evaluation without touching on goal setting.

Tip # 1

Set goals!

- People often set unattainable goals for themselves.
 - This no doubt facilitates unmet goals.
- SMART-C Goals.
 - **Specific:** How much of what is to be achieved by when (e.g., May 2022)?
 - **Measurable:** Is it measureable?
 - **Achievable:** It is feasible to pull off?
 - **Relevant to the mission:** Is it relevant to the mission?
 - **Timed:** We need a target of when our goal will be achieved.
 - **Challenging:** Will it stretch me to grow?
- Goal setting should be an iterative process.
 - Set goal > behave > evaluate > adjust as needed
- **Action Plan:** People don't plan to fail but they often fail to plan.

Successful people track and make data driven decisions.

Tip # 2

Self-monitor (reflect and refine)!

- How can I monitor my behavior change?
 - Low tech: Logs or calendars with notes.
 - High tech: Apps, websites, wearables, etc...
- Focus on how you feel as apposed to solely considering objective health improvement.
 - Do you feel “better”?
- Is failure a failure?
 - For most repeat behavior, relapse is probable following change.
 - This possibility must be acceptable.
 - Lapse/relapse is a learning experience.
 - Black and white thinking – either you are perfect or a failure.
 - Catastrophizing – making it more than it is.
 - Filtering – focusing on negatives and magnifying them in relation to the positives.
- Self-monitoring over time.
 - As behavior becomes routine/habitual the need to monitor can reduce and the process can be simplified or end completely.

Ignoring self-reinforcing capabilities reinforces a truncated view of human nature.

Tip # 3

Reinforce your own behavior (i.e. self-reinforcement)!

- It is okay to congratulate yourself.
 - Most people don't reward themselves for hard work.
 - It is critical to appreciate the work you do.
- Why focus on self-reinforcement?
 - The individual exercises full control over the reinforcement, thus, reinforcement is freely available.
 - To do this it is important to have standards of performance.
 - Obviously it is important to have attainable standards.
 - Often we use past behavior as a reference point from which to judge.
 - Be sure to plan and envision the reward in advance.
- Spend time examining your thoughts and feelings (reflection).
 - We are able to offer up to ourselves both tangible and intangible rewards.
 - Focus on the relationship between successful behavior and its generation of internal rewards.

Thank you!!!

When all else fails.....aversion therapy,
like some of us saw in Stanley Kubrick's
"A Clockwork Orange."

Disclaimer: I am being facetious.



For help incorporating content discussed today
contact your doctor or other health professional to
assist you in finding a health behavior coach!